

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 07389 211851Z
ACTION IO-14

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TAGS: AORG, UN
SUBJECT: GENEVA GROUP OF ROME'S ANNUAL REPORT

1. THE GENEVA GROUP OF ROME ADOPTED ON MARCH 20, 1978 THE FOLLOWING REPORT OF ITS ACTIVITIES DURING THE PERIOD FEBRUARY 1977 TO FEBRUARY 1978.

2. BEGIN TEXT: THE GENEVA GROUP OF ROME (GGR) HAS HAD AN ACTIVE TIME DURING THE PERIOD COVERED BY THIS GJPORT, FEBRUARY 1977 TO FEBRUARY 1978.

EARLY IN 1977 THE GGR MET AND DISCUSSED A TARGET BUDGET FIGURE FOR THE FAO'S 1978/79 BIENNIUM. EVEN THOUGH ALL THE MEMBERS WERE IN AGREEMENT ON A TIGHT FAO BUDGET, THE GGR DID NOT ARRIVE AT A SPECIFIC TARGET FIGURE OR A PERCENTAGE REAL GROWTH FIGURE. IN THIS SITUATION THE GGR DECIDED THAT WHAT WAS MOST IMPORTANT WAS TO START A DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE GGR AND THE FAO DIRECTOR-GENERAL EDOUARD SAOUMA. AT THE SUGGESTION OF THE GGR, THE CO-CHAIRMEN MET WITH THE DIRECTOR GENERAL TO STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF A CONTINUING DIALOGUE AND THE DESIRABILITY OF STRICTLY LIMITING

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PAGE 02 ROME 07389 211851Z

BUDGETARY GROWTH OF THE FAO.

IN MAY, THE UNITED STATES ASKED THE GGR TO CONSIDER THE FAO'S TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAM (TCP) AND EXPRESSED ITS OPINION THAT THE MANDATE FOR THIS PROGRAM BE REDUCED AND THE WHOLE PROGRAM SUBJECTED TO OUTSIDE EVALUATION. MEMBERS OF THE GGR EXPRESSED THEIR SYMPATHY WITH THE U.S. POSITION BUT BELIEVED

THAT IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TACTICALLY TO PRESS THE ISSUE. FOLLOWING CRITICISM BY A NUMBER OF GGR MEMBERS AT THE FAO JUNE COUNCIL OF ASPECTS OF THE TCP, THE DG UNDERTOOK TO ORGANIZE AN EVALUATION OF THE TCP WITH OUTSIDE EXPERTISE.

THE GGR'S SUBCOMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL AFFAIRS AND PROGRAM AFFAIRS MET SEVERAL TIMES IN THE SPRING AND SUMMER ON THE PROPOSED FAO PROGRAM OF WORK AND BUDGET FOR 1978-79. IN SEPTEMBER, THE GGR APPROVED A PAPER COMMENTING ON THE STANDARD ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR PROGRAM ANALYSIS TO BE SENT TO THE GENEVA GROUP CONSULTATIVE LEVEL SESSION MEETING IN N.Y. IN OCTOBER 1977.

FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE YEAR THE GGR MET TO PREPARE FOR THE 19TH FAO CONFERENCE BY REVIEWING THE FAO PROGRAM OF WORK AND BUDGET, BY BEING BRIEFED BY GG MEMBERS OF LIE PROGRAM AND FINANCE COMMITTEES, AND BY DISCUSSING GG MEMBER STATE POSITIONS IN ADVANCE OF THE NOVEMBER COUNCIL AND CONFERENCE, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S PROPOSALS FOR FINANCING A POST-HARVEST LOSSES PROGRAM FROM THE SURPLUS IN THE CURRENCY RESERVE ACCOUNT. THIS WORK CULMINATED IN A VERY EFFECTIVE DIALOGUE STARTING IN THE COUNCIL AND CONTINUING THROUGH THE CONFERENCE BY MEANS OF A "CONTACT GROUP" MADE UP OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GROUP OF 77, THE FAO DIRECTOR-GENERAL, AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GGR. THIS CONTACT GROUP REDRAFTED AND PRODUCED ACCEPTABLE RESOLUTIONS ON POST-HARVEST LOSSES (PHL) AND A RESERVE ACCOUNT. IN THIS DIALOGUE THE GGR VERY SUCCESSFULLY MAINTAINED A UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 ROME 07389 211851Z

UNIFIED STAND ON THE PRINCIPLE OF THE VOLUNTARY FUNDING OF THE PHL PROGRAM.

BECAUSE OF THE PRIORITY MEMBERS OF THE GGR PLACED ON PRODUCING AN APPROPRIATE SOLUTION TO THE FUNDING OF A POSTHARVEST LOSSES PROGRAM, AND THE GROUP'S RESISTANCE TO "PACKAGING" THIS ISSUE WITH THE BUDGET-LEVEL ISSUE, THE QUESTION OF THE 1978-79 FAO BUDGET LEVEL WAS NOT EXAMINED IN THE CONTACT GROUP. THE GGR, THEREFORE, ATTEMPTED TO OPEN A DEBATE AT THE CONFERENCE DESIGNED TO ILLUSTRATE THEIR RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE FAO'S METHOD OF ANTICIPATING THE POSSIBLE COSTS OF FUTURE INFLATION AND THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S LAST-MINUTE INCREASES IN THE FAO BUDGET.

AFTER THE DIRECTOR GENERAL'S VIGOROUS DEFENSE OF HIS BUDGET AND ITS STRONG SUPPORT BY THE GROUP OF 77, THE GGR MET AND FIVE OF ITS MEMBERS AND TWO OBSERVERS, REPRESENTING MORE THAN ONE-HALF OF THE TOTAL FAO BUDGET CONTRIBUTIONS, DECIDED TO ABSTAIN ON THE FAO BUDGET VOTE. THE MEMBERS OF THE GROUP AGREED, HOWEVER, ON THE JOINT STATEMENT ATTACHED, WHICH REPRESENTS THE STARTING POINT FOR THE WORK OF THE GGR IN 1978.

IN JANUARY 1978 THE GGR MET TO ORGANIZE ITSELF FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS

OF THE FAO BUDGET WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO PERCENTAGE REAL GROWTH DURING THE NEXT BIENNium, IE. 1980-81 TWO SUBCOMMITTEES HAVE BEEN FORMED WHICH ARE WORKING ON THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS:
SUB-COMMITTEE ONE--PROGRAM AND BUDGET: (CANADA--CHAIRWOMAN, FRG, ITALY, AUSTRALIA, AND U.S.)

1. FURTHER WORK ON PROGRAM REVIEW AND ANALYSIS AND THE FAO PROGRAM OF WORK AND BUDGET, INCLUDING REAL GROWTH TARGETS.
2. EXAMINATION OF FAO METHOD OF ESTIMATING IMPACT OF INFLATION.
3. IDENTIFICATION OF AGREED HIGH AND LOW PRIORITY AREAS.

SUB-COMMITTEE TWO--TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND FIELD PROGRAMS:
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 ROME 07389 211851Z

(NETHERLANDS--CHAIRMAN, JAPAN, FRANCE,IOELGIUM, SWEDEN (OBSERVER), AND UK)

1. FAO METHOD OF CALCULATING OVERHEAD COSTS.
2. IMPACT OF COUNTRY REPS' OFFICES ON NEXT BUDGET AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE REGIONAL OFFICES.
3. IMPACT OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, ESPECIALLY TCP.
4. IMPACT OF PHL ASSISTANCE.
5. UNDP--FAO RELATIONS. END TEXT
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